Pam
Miss. personnel
1734-8

Who Is Qualified to Prepare for Foreign Missionary Service?

By
FENNELL P. TURNER

The need for workers in the foreign mission field was never so great or so urgent as at the present time.

From missions already established, there is the pressing, constant demand year after year for men and women to fill the places of those who fall at their posts or are compelled to retire from active service for reasons beyond their control. The rapid growth of the work has created a demand for the enlargement of the staff of every mission. There is the call for workers from the unoccupied portions of the occupied fields. There is also the appeal of the wholly unoccupied territory where no missions have been established. The

cry for help that comes from all these fields is not that of one man, but of multitudes "having no hope and without God in the world."

The demand from the foreign mission field is not only for an increase in the number of workers; greater emphasis than ever before is laid on the better preparation of missionaries. The call for specialists comes from missions which have been established for years. The demand is that the ordained missionary should have more thorough preparation than his predecessors. The doctor should have college training, four years in medical school, and adequate hospital training. The teacher who goes to the foreign mission field should take special courses in education.

In response to this demand for better preparation, Boards of Missionary Preparation have been established on both sides of the Atlantic. They are attempting to formulate standards of preparation which are necessary for foreign missionaries. Theological seminaries, missionary training schools and

colleges are adding professors and are offering additional courses in order to be in a position to supply this special training for missionary candidates.

All this emphasis on better preparation and on specialization has resulted in some confusion as to the real objective of the missionary's work. Consequently, we find some candidates putting the emphasis on the professional qualifications and others on the specific calls which are constantly coming from the field rather than on the real purpose of the missionary enterprise. In their commendable zeal to be professionally qualified and to do the work for which this professional training fits them, they have sometimes lost sight of the vocation of the missionary, and not a few young missionaries have become discouraged upon reaching the field because the special work which they thought they had been sent out to do was not open to them. The real objective of foreign missions has been confused with the methods of doing the work; and an undue emphasis has been placed upon the professional aspects

ather than upon the aim of the enter-
rise.

Men and women are required for missionary work who know Jesus Christ as personal Saviour and Lord, and are so filled with His Spirit that they go forth as His ambassadors. From personal experience they know that He alone can give life and supply the energy which is necessary if men are to become His disciples and are to live the life which makes possible their becoming uplifting forces in the communities where they work. The fundamental principle which should be emphasized as strongly as possible is this: only men who are moved by the primary purpose which called the whole missionary enterprise into existence are prepared to do the work of missionaries. The real purpose of the missionary enterprise is to give all people an adequate opportunity to know Jesus Christ as their Saviour and to become His real disciples, and to found and build up His Church so that it may become, as soon as possible, self-propagating, self-supporting and self-govern-

ing. Dominated by this compelling motive, the professional aspects of one's work become secondary—not unimportant, but simply the means to the great end. Moved by this conception, the missionary candidate does not ask whether doctors, preachers, agriculturists, nurses, teachers, etc., are needed; his position is: I believe it to be God's will that I take Christ to non-Christian people and build up His Church. What can I do which will facilitate and make most effective my great objective? If I am to become a doctor, I will prepare to be the best doctor which it is possible for me to be. If a teacher, I will leave nothing out of my preparation which will increase my efficiency as a teacher. If my purpose can best be fulfilled by showing people how to improve their agricultural methods or by leading them in their industrial pursuits, then I will take the preparation which is required for this form of service. If it is as an evangelistic worker, then I will make the preparation which will fit me best to do the work of an evangelist.

A study of the lives of the missionaries through whose labors men and women in non-Christian lands have become the disciples of Jesus Christ, and churches have been founded and developed, hospitals established, schools organized, and Christian communities have come into existence, shows that they were dominated by the consciousness of the mission to make Jesus Christ known to the people as their Saviour, and to lead them to become His true disciples. David Livingstone decided first to become a missionary. He studied medicine because he believed that through this profession he could most effectually accomplish his purpose. Bishop Alfred Robert Tucker was at the beginning of his career an artist of great promise; one day as he painted a picture of a homeless, lost woman, he cried out: "God help me, why don't I go to lost people themselves instead of painting pictures of them." So, moved by the desire to go, as he expressed it, 'to that part of the world where men and women seem to be most lost," he prepared himself to do the work of an

ordained missionary, went to East Africa and preached Christ to the people of Uganda.

Men of a wide variety of training and talents, impelled by the motive which we have described, have unlimited scope for these talents in their vocation as foreign missionaries. Alexander Mackay was trained in Edinburgh University as a mechanical engineer. A few years after graduation, he was led to offer himself to a missionary society for service in Africa. No doubt his training as a mechanical engineer was an important factor in the Board's decision to accept him, but Alexander Mackay did not go to Africa to practise his profession as a mechanical engineer. He went to Africa because of his desire to preach Jesus Christ to the people of Uganda. His training as an engineer was not lost. He made use of it day after day, but it was secondary to the great compelling objective which led him to give years of painful self-sacrificing effort to the people among whom he labored.

Furthermore, the missionary candidate who goes to the field actuated by this motive is not disturbed if on account of changes in conditions his own work must be different from that which he expected it would be. Since his vocation is that of a missionary, the kind of work which he is to do is of secondary importance. He is ready not only to "become all things to all men that he may by all means save some," but he is ready to undertake any kind of service which may be necessary. Arthur Jackson, a Cambridge man, went to Manchuria to become a professor in a medical school. He had been there only a few weeks when the ravages of the Plague called for someone to do inspection duty at a railway station. In the spirit of Christ, Jackson responded to this call. He could have justified a negative response on the ground that he went out to work as a professor in a college, but the motive which dominated Jackson made the work of inspecting the coolies from the plague district as genuinely missionary work

as that of lecturing to students at the college.

Some years ago a medical graduate applied to his Board for appointment as a medical missionary. The financial position of the Board was such that a medical missionary could not be appointed. The only opening was for a teacher of English in a Government school in a small city in Japan. He might have declined to go to Japan on the ground that he had prepared as a medical missionary. However, his primary motive was to preach Jesus Christ, so he went to Japan and worked as a teacher of English in the Government school because this work afforded that opportunity. Through his work and influence a small group of Japanese young men accepted Christ, and have since become the leaders of the Church in their Province. The question may be raised: Did not this man make a mistake in turning aside from his profession as a medical missionary? So far as he was concerned, there is but one answer. He had dedicated his life to the task of making Jesus Christ

known to non-Christian peoples. The way to go as a medical missionary was closed. The teaching of English in a Government school afforded the opportunity to enter upon his vocation as a missionary, and he took advantage of it.

The candidate must place the emphasis where it belongs: on the objective, the end to be accomplished. Then the important question of professional qualifications and training will fall into its rightful place. Every form of service is needed and is effective, provided it is rightly related to the primary aim. And the missionary candidate must make the preparation which experience proves necessary. In his eagerness to prepare for his profession, he must not lose sight of his vocation. This objective kept constantly in view will be to the missionary candidate the greatest inspiration to secure the preparation which is necessary. God does not approve carelessly prepared workers or slipshod workmanship. It will also lead to the best work and the greatest results on the field. Unless men go to the mission field with the right mo-

tive, it is impossible for Jesus Christ to work in and through them, and unless He do this, there can be no results of an abiding character.

For the majority of those who decide to become foreign missionaries, no change of profession is necessary. If a man has decided to enter the Christian ministry, he will add to his preparation for the ministry the special preparation which is necessary for the ordained foreign missionary. If he expects to become a physician, he will add to the studies required of the doctor in the homeland any additional studies which may be necessary in the preparation of the medical missionary. However, if the missionary candidate finds that the profession for which he is preparing is not such as will enable him most efficiently to follow the vocation of a foreign missionary, he will not hesitate to change his course of study. I have known young men looking forward to professions such as scientific agriculture, engineering in its different branches, architecture, etc., who have turned aside from these use-

ful callings to prepare as ordained evangelistic missionaries, as teachers or as doctors because the training in these professions better fitted them for the vocation of foreign missionaries. When dominated by the motive which ought to cause men to dedicate their lives to foreign missionary service, they will not hesitate to change their courses whenever such changes will better fit them to do the work which they go out to do.

Men and women who feel that they should go as missionaries are not excused from their missionary responsibility because they distrust their abilities or have not had all the ideal training. No matter how humble an opinion they may have of themselves, they should frankly face their missionary duty and not regard the question closed until they have conferred with one of the secretaries[1] of the Student Volunteer Movement or of a Foreign Mission Board. The desire to become

[1] Information may be secured by writing to the General Secretary, Student Volunteer Movement, 25 Madison Avenue, New York.

a missionary creates the obligation to secure the training necessary for efficient service on the mission field.

If circumstances make it impossible for missionary candidates to take additional preparation, they should apply to their foreign mission Boards, and if the Boards find it possible to accept them, go to the mission field with such preparation as they have.

When the owner of the ship on which Robert Morrison had engaged passage learned that his passenger was going to China as a missionary, he said with a sneer: "And so, Mr. Morrison, you really expect that you will make an impression on the idolatry of the great Chinese Empire?" "No, sir," replied Morrison, "but I expect God will." The men and women who enter upon foreign missionary work to-day must be driven by the same spirit and motive and have the same faith as that which took the pioneer Morrison to China. In those days to all but the few whose eyes had been opened, the task was absolutely impossible and hopeless; it was a fool's errand. To-day men look

Copies of this pamphlet may be ordered from the Student Volunteer Movement, 25 Madison Avenue, New York City, at 5c. each, 50c. per dozen, $3.00 per hundred, express charges prepaid.

Copyright, 1915, By
STUDENT VOLUNTEER MOVEMENT
FOR FOREIGN MISSIONS